



Newington Public School

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Peter Latchaw, Principal

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August 31, 2020

Dear Community of Newington,

First, I want to take this opportunity to thank the Newington Community for all of your support especially last Spring. The NPS staff and I are currently preparing for the upcoming school year. As a school, we are committed to doing everything possible to keep our students learning **in our building**. As an educational community we have developed strategies and protocols to help us and adhere to COVID-19 guidelines. All staff and students will be wearing masks in the building and practicing social distancing. Sadly, visitors and volunteers will not be able to join us in our learning spaces. We look forward to welcoming you back once the threat of COVID-19 is behind us. You will see our classes utilizing the school's outdoor spaces for learning experiences as much as possible. Tents will be set up and learning will take place outdoors in the field areas between the school and the tennis courts. Some days we will also be on the tennis courts. Several community members have reached out to me to ask what they can do to help. By providing us a wide berth and making sure that only students and staff members are on school grounds during the day, you will assist us in achieving our goal. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to use the outdoor community space to keep our students and staff safe.

Below I have shared some parts to my welcome back to school letter:

Welcome Back!

I hope you are enjoying a wonderful summer with your families. I also hope you and your children are relaxed, recharged and ready to start a new school year. As we plan for a beginning like no other we have seen in the past, our focus at Newington Public School will still be to ensure that: **all student's needs are being met socially and academically**.

The Spring of 2020, challenged Newington Public School staff and students to find a new normal for learning, connected us in new ways and required our champions to champion from afar. What I have most learned through this process is how much I appreciate the expertise our teachers bring to NPS, the ways in which our students continue to work hard to grow. What I MOST

appreciate about Newington Public School is how even under circumstances we have never experienced we are still a learning and caring community.

Normal is such a simple word and it is our goal at Newington Public School to not only find our new normal, but to use this time as a learning experience that will forever impact the learning environment of NPS. Every week there are new types of learning experiences teachers are piloting and much of what is learned will continue to be used in the future. Our fall may not be “normal,” but our learning will not only continue, but it will thrive. We can’t wait to move on to the next phase of learning under COVID-19 and we know all returning and new students to Newington Public School will be welcomed with open arms (from 6 feet away) to our community.

The NPS staff and I have spent a great deal of time preparing for the 2020-2021 school year. Even though things will look a little different around the school. All signs point to another incredible and productive school year. Our skilled and devoted staff is ready and prepared for your child(ren). Mrs. Loewy is busy registering new families, ordering needed materials and updating student files. Chef Tom has spent the entire summer thoroughly cleaning the facility. And, our much-appreciated Newington School Supporters (NSS) donated five thousand dollars for us to use and put towards outdoor learning. NSS is also gearing up to welcome families at our back to school picnics at the Old Town Grove September 8-11 from 5:30-7:00 PM (**Back to school Picnic schedule: grades 5 - 9/8, grades 3/4 - 9/9, grades 1/2 - 9/10, and kindergarten 9/11**).

New Staff

Each year brings change. This year we have two beloved members of our teaching staff retiring Cheryl Berman and Beth Brown (please click to read [Mrs. Brown's retirement letter](#)). We are hoping that in the near future we can all celebrate with Senora and Mrs. Brown on their amazing careers at NPS. I am very pleased to introduce a few staff not new to NPS but in new positions. We are delighted to welcome back Miss Devon Brunner, as a special education paraprofessional. I am also excited to share that Mrs. Bastille will be our new kindergarten teacher for the 2020-2021 school year (link to [Mrs. Bastille's introductory letter](#)). We are currently reviewing applications for Spanish and for the Reading/Math Specialist.

Facilities Update

If you drove past the school or utilized our outdoor playing spaces this summer, you may have noticed numerous maintenance and construction projects taking place. First, Tom cleaned/scrubbed the entire school. He also repainted several classrooms, re-caulked exterior windows, and washed all of the school carpets. Recently, Tom and I made plexiglass work stations for all teachers and staff at NPS.

Finally, a construction project will begin shortly. Last year Mrs. Murphy was awarded a Clipper Grant to construct an outdoor sensory path. Just today all of the stencils finally arrived. I am hoping to get started on this project in the very near future.

Announcements:

The Fox Point Sunset five miler road race registration – for a VIRTUAL race this year – is still open. Sponsored by the Newington School Supporters and various businesses in the area, it is still our main fundraiser. Please go to <http://foxpath5miler.org/> for more details and to register.

Playground work at the Town Grove is continuing – this information is provided by Jess Morgan:

Volunteers needed: The Newington Fire Department has been hard at work preparing the old playground. The installers will be putting in the new equipment on Thursday, Sept. 3rd. The playground mulch delivery will be on Sept. 4th. We need a volunteer with a tractor on Friday (or Sat. at the latest) to move mulch piles to each area. Here is the link to sign up if you can assist!

www.volunteersignup.org Newington OTH Playground Reno signup sheet

Our focus, by necessity, for the start of this year is to make sure we have a safe school environment to safeguard the health of all students and staff. Attached is a letter from our school nurses, Mrs. Russo and Mrs. Daly: [Nurses letter Aug2020.pdf](#)

OTHER Important Information

What is new or on the horizon for the NPS learning community? First, if you have not had a chance yet, please take a moment to read the [Newington Public School Re-Entry Plan](#).

- [2020-2021 School Calendar](#)
- First day of school: Tuesday, Sept 8th
- School Day is 8:05 - 3:00 PM
- The school week is Monday - Thursday in person at NPS and Friday is remote.

Thank you to all who are helping and supporting us to prepare for the new school year. I eagerly look forward to greeting students and families again. It remains an honor and privilege to serve as your principal. Please stop by and say hello. Together, I know we will make this school year one of growth and achievement for all NPS students.

Sincerely,

Pete Latchaw

Pete Latchaw, Principal

